

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 6, with the following amended paragraph:

-- This application is a continuation of U.S. Serial No. 09/077,835, filed June 4, 1998, which is a continuation-in-part of ~~now pending~~ PCT/US96/00235, filed January 2, 1996 ~~02 January 1996~~, which claims priority from U.S. Serial No. ~~[[:]]~~ 08/367,939, filed January 3, 1995, which claims priority from PCT/US95/15694, filed December 4, 1995 ~~04 December 1995~~, which claims priority from PCT/US95/15666, filed December 4, 1995 ~~04 December 1995~~. The disclosures of the prior applications are hereby incorporated by reference ~~All of the foregoing are incorporated herein by reference.~~

Please delete previous abstract and add the following new abstract:

-- This invention is a brush form optical coupler having a multiplicity of freely extending fiber end portions, sized and positioned to make optical contact with a subject, examination, and monitoring systems utilizing one or more of such couplers. --